



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

VOCATIONAL WORK OF THE INVALIDED SOLDIERS' COMMISSION OF CANADA

BY T. B. KIDNER,

Vocational Secretary, Invalided Soldiers' Commission of Canada. (Now on duty
with the Federal Board for Vocational Education, Rehabilitation
Division, Washington, D. C.)

In this article I shall not go very fully into particulars of the work undertaken in Canada in connection with the rehabilitation of our wounded and disabled men, except in so far as will be necessary to afford a background for a few lessons which it seems to me may be learned from Canada's experience.

We think a great deal about the war cripple, as the man who has lost an arm or a leg. Now there are reasons for our thinking this way, but I happen to have some striking figures as to the ratio of surgical to medical cases in the present war. In a report issued by the British Minister of Pensions for the week ending August 23, 1918, the latest report to be received on this side—at least it is the latest that we have in Washington—was that there were 55,869 men under treatment in the hospitals in Great Britain. Of that 55,869, 20,495 were suffering from wounds and injuries—just a trifle over 36 per cent. Nearly 2,500 were suffering from neurasthenia, paraplegia 224, epilepsy 474, and this is the appalling figure, the next one, 7,576 from tuberculosis. From other general diseases—everything under the sun, if I know anything about it from our experience in our Canadian work—other diseases 24,672. I merely mention that because the problem of the absorption of the disabled from war into industry is not wholly a problem of dealing with a man who has lost an arm, or lost a leg, or eyesight. I am thankful to say that the latter are very few in comparison. Six weeks ago we wished to have the exact figures to date, and the Canadian official figures to date of the number of men blinded in the war out of our Canadian Army of nearly half a million men were forty six. Forty-six men have lost their sight to date. That is bad enough, but I think it cannot be too often rubbed in, so to speak, that the war cripple in a great majority of cases is outwardly whole. He is not what we see in the magazines

and the moving-pictures, etc., although that is the kind of thing, of course, that the magazine illustrator wants. The very first man on this side to do any publicity work on this subject, and he has done yeoman service, sent to Canada to us for some pictures. When he was given pictures of the men attending some of our hospital schools, he sent them back and said, "That is not the kind of a picture I want. These men don't look like war cripples."

We had very little information upon which to build our policy when, about the middle of the year 1915, our disabled men began to come back to Canada. The first consideration was the provision of convalescent hospitals, for at that time hardly any men requiring active treatment were sent home. The Military Hospitals Commission (now the Invalided Soldiers' Commission) was appointed to provide convalescent hospitals, and before long a chain of these institutions was in operation from coast to coast. It soon appeared, however, that if these men were to be returned to civil life, arrangements would have to be made for their employment. Therefore, in co-operation with the several provinces, employment commissions were established in each province by the provincial government to work with the federal authorities. At the same time the matter of providing vocational re-education for those whose disabilities would prevent their return to their former occupations was also considered, and early in 1916 steps were taken to inaugurate this work. In this phase in particular, there was very little upon which to base any plans, and the first step undertaken was to make a survey of several groups of disabled men in different parts of the country. We had up to that time rather less than one thousand men on our hands returned disabled from the other side. This survey revealed several very interesting and significant facts, perhaps the most important of which was that only a comparatively small proportion of the disabled would be unable to return to their former occupations. I need not elaborate this, for it is well known and is borne out by the experience of our Allies, but roughly speaking, it appeared that of the men returned to Canada as unfit for further service, only about 10 per cent required re-education for new occupations. Of course, this is not a percentage of the total wounded, the great majority of whom are restored to further usefulness in hospitals on the other side.

Another interesting fact revealed by our first hurried survey and

borne out by our experience since, was the small proportion of men suffering from the loss of a limb. Up to the first of June last out of nearly 30,000 disabled men returned to Canada, less than 1,500 had suffered a major amputation.

Serious, then, though it is in point of complexity and difficulties, the provision of vocational re-education for new occupations is not a serious one in point of the total number of men to be dealt with. At the outset, therefore, the Military Hospitals Commission felt that for the moment there was a more pressing need and that was to provide occupation, as far as medical requirements would allow, for all men undergoing convalescent treatment in the commission's hospitals. Commencing in a small way, this has grown until in or in connection with each institution where disabled men are undergoing treatment in Canada, there is provided a wide range of opportunities for occupational work during a man's hospital period. The value of this work is manifold; first, from the therapeutic standpoint, I think the commission has proved the value of occupation for mind and body of the sick man. Of course, this was not an entirely new thing, for something of the sort had been in operation for some years in connection with the treatment of mental cases in many of the more advanced institutions. I think, however, that it was the first time that the work had been undertaken on so large a scale and to embrace such a variety of occupations. The facilities included class rooms for general educational work, commercial training, workshops for arts and crafts, and a variety of mechanical and other occupations, and also outdoor work in gardening and poultry-keeping.

A second point of value was that it was disciplinary both for the disabled man himself in that it prevented that moral and social deterioration, which is always a result of a prolonged period of idleness, and was also of value in the discipline of the institution itself. There was at first a tendency to spoil our returned men by over-attention and for this it was found that active, interesting occupations formed the best antidote.

A third point which I think was proved most conclusively was that in a great many cases a man's deficiencies of education could be supplemented, or he could be given an opportunity of improving himself in some way, so that upon his return to civil life his earning capacity was increased as the result of his hospital experience. In hundreds of instances men who have passed through the hospital

schools in Canada are today holding better positions and earning more money than they were able to earn before they enlisted. I believe that the results in this respect alone have been worth the expenditure of all the time and money which this work has entailed. Later on, cases requiring active treatment were returned to Canada and for these men light ward occupations were provided, but in my opinion such work can have but little vocational value, although it may form an important therapeutic agency in the restoration of the man to health.

The commission next turned its attention to the serious task of providing vocational re-education for those who could not take up their former occupations. As a preliminary—two things seemed to be absolutely necessary. Already we were hearing from France of the reluctance of men to overcome their handicap and improve their earning capacity by means of vocational or industrial training because of the fear that it might reduce their pensions. There were indications also from Germany that the same condition of things prevailed there. Canada was at the time making new pension regulations and therefore it was arranged that a very distinct regulation on this matter should be included. Section 9 of the Pensions regulations dated June 3, 1916, reads as follows:

No deductions shall be made from the amount awarded to any pensioner owing to his having undertaken work or perfected himself in some form of industry.

That is to say, a man's pension is determined by his disability in the open labor market and not by his earning capacity, which may be tremendously improved by his vocational re-education, of course to his own benefit, but even more to the benefit of the community and the nation.

The other consideration was the question as to how a man and his dependents should be supported during his period of training, for it was obvious that a man could not be expected to undertake any course unless he could be assured of his support and of the support of those dependent upon him during the time that he is undergoing re-education. That of course brought up the much debated question as to whether a man should be retained as a soldier and receive his military pay and allowance during his period of training, or should be discharged and maintained by the government on some other basis as a civilian. I need not elaborate on that. It has been a subject of a great deal of discussion in the United States and in all

of the countries that are dealing with this problem. The Canadian authorities decided on the latter method, I am glad to say, and established a scale of pay and allowance graduated according to the number of a man's dependents, which should be payable to the man during his period of training and for one month after his course is completed. I was glad because I believe that the duty of replacing a man in civil life as a useful member of a community once more is not a military function. In point of fact, the process of rehabilitation of a disabled soldier or sailor must include his demilitarization, so to speak. It is a necessity that as a soldier or sailor he shall sink his individuality and shall in all respects live under orders in all his doings throughout his military career. It is this very fact which has made the problem of the ex-soldier always a difficult one, and in my opinion just as soon as it is decided that a man is of no further use in military service, he should be discharged to the care of some civilian authority should he need further treatment in the way of education or training to fit him for replacement in civil life.

Having settled these two points, the matter of providing courses in vocational re-education in new occupations was taken up vigorously. May I point out one thing on which there would seem to be a good deal of misapprehension? None of the warring countries has endeavored to provide re-education for new occupations for all discharged men, but only for those whose disabilities incurred on service will prevent them returning to their former occupations. The provision of a course of re-education is not the reward of valor, but a recognition of the fact that it is to the interest of the nation as well as to the individual concerned that every disabled man be restored as far as possible to the fullest usefulness.

I think, however, that the United States, by virtue of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, passed by Congress on June 27 last, goes further than any other country, for it *does* provide that any man who is entitled to compensation as a result of his injuries may be provided, after his discharge, with a course of training at the expense of the government, even though he may be able to return to his former occupation. No provision is made, however, for his maintenance, or that of his dependents, during his training, though he will receive any compensation due him under the War Risk Insurance Act. But if his disability prevents his return to his former occupation, he will not only receive his training at the expense of the government,

but his other expenses will be met and allowances for his family will be continued, just as if he were still in military service. For this last class of men, the provisions are very similar in the United States to those in Canada.

One of the first questions usually asked by inquirers is: "For what occupations do you train the disabled men?" A line of investigation which seems to attract a great many is the attempt to discover specific occupations which will fit, or be suitable for, men suffering from specific disabilities. In my opinion, this is not possible, for there are so many factors, practically every one of which is variable, to be taken into consideration. Further, in a great many cases, the disabled man is suffering from a complication of disabilities. He may, for instance, have some disabling leg condition which would be no bar to his taking up any one of a large variety of occupations, but he may also have been gassed, or have heart trouble, which, together with his leg disability, makes it greatly more difficult to find a suitable occupation towards which he may be directed.

In our practice in Canada, from the first, we adopted the plan of considering every case individually in the light of every factor which may have a possible bearing on the case. This plan has been adopted also by the Federal Board in dealing with disabled American soldiers and sailors.

I have in my possession some survey blanks which are used by the vocational advisers of the board in dealing with disabled men who are potential cases for re-education and it may be of interest to mention, briefly, some of the items of information asked for so as to enable a man's future occupation to be considered intelligently in the light, as I have said before, of all the factors likely to bear on his case.

After the usual identification particulars common to all such forms, such items as the birthplace of the man and, if he were born abroad, the date he came to this country follow. Then comes a simple statement of his disability. One of the most important factors is the man's educational history, both the amount and kind, and this is most carefully inquired into and recorded. Of even greater importance in many cases is his industrial history, for this is often most revealing of the man's nature and characteristics, as well as of his skill or experience in the occupations.

I have just used a phrase which I should like to repeat. I spoke

of the new occupation "towards which a disabled man is to be directed." I used that phrase advisedly, for it is of great significance. The disabled man himself must have the will to succeed, the will to overcome his handicap, if his re-education and successful placement in a suitable position in some civil occupation are to be accomplished. No compulsory scheme for the re-education of our disabled is possible. In the language of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of Congress, the man "elects" his course. It goes without saying, though, that he must be assisted in every way to elect wisely, to elect not on his whim of the moment, but in the light of all the information with which his vocational advisers can provide him.

The next question on the form is, then, an inquiry as to the man's preference (or preferences, for he is asked to make a second and a third choice) for his new occupation. Various items regarding his personal characteristics are next recorded, after which a record is made of the occupational work he has done as a part of his therapeutic treatment during his hospital period. Under the auspices of the Surgeon General of the Army, training in a variety of work is provided as a therapeutic measure in the reconstruction hospitals. The officers in charge of this work are often able to make good suggestions as to a man's future occupation in the light of their experience of him in the hospital classes. A careful medical examination is then made to discover the man's remaining abilities, and, side by side, the technical and medical experts consider the several occupations which, in the light of the numerous factors briefly indicated as appearing on the survey form, may be open to him.

Thus, and thus only, in my opinion, should the very serious duty of directing an adult towards a new occupation be undertaken. In Canada, our disabled men are being trained in about two hundred occupations and it is hoped that with the greater industrial development of the United States, an even wider range of occupations will be possible on this side of the line.

It is, of course, a cardinal principle that a man's previous education and experience should not be "scrapped," but rather should form a background or foundation for his new occupation. Hence, if at all possible, a disabled man is trained either for some new branch of his former occupation, or for some allied or related occupation.

The training is given in a variety of ways. Some few occupa-

tions can be taught in schools or other institutions, others only in the industries themselves. Others again can best be taught by a combination of these two methods. The Federal Board plans to use all three methods. The many existing institutions will be used for such occupations as can be taught in them properly. The industries of the country will be used as training places for the much larger number of occupations which cannot be taught in schools or colleges. Already the board has been assured of the hearty coöperation both of employers and representatives of labor in this work.

The wide distribution of the disabled throughout a great variety of occupations is in my opinion wise and expedient. Many troubles which would occur if a large number of disabled men were trained for a few occupations will thereby be avoided. It would be most unwise to train our disabled men for new occupations merely because it was easy to provide training in a certain few. Therefore the policy of spreading the men out is the wisest, but as I say it is hoped that here in the United States even more occupations will be found than the range of two hundred, in which we are training our disabled men in Canada.

I have rather refrained from statistics but I should like to quote briefly from the latest figures as to vocational re-education in Canada. To date 1,347 men have completed courses of re-education for new occupations and 1,868 are at present taking courses. In addition over 2,000 are taking courses during convalescence in the curative workshops and class rooms attached to the convalescent hospitals.

I think it can be fairly stated that the majority of the men who have completed their courses are today in at least as good positions as they filled before enlistment and many are actually better off. It must be remembered that they are continuing to receive their pensions, in addition, in many cases, to being able to earn the full wages paid in the industry in which they are working. That is to say, instead of leaving as an aftermath of the war a large number of men dragging out a useless existence as pensioners on the nation and on other agencies, public or private, they are self-supporting, capable members of the community, fulfilling their duties in peace as they did in war.

It seems to me that this is one of the big things we are learning from the war and already there is evidence that the lesson will be carried over into industry for the benefit of the large number of

victims of industrial accidents and disease annually resulting from modern industrial life. At this moment there is a bill before Congress, "To provide for the promotion of vocational rehabilitation of persons disabled in industry or otherwise and their return to civil employment." The bill proposes a scheme of coöperation between federal and state authorities, very much of the type already in operation under the provisions of the Smith-Hughes Act for Vocational Education. The experience gained in dealing with the disabled from war will be of great value in dealing with the victims of industry. Already many firms and corporations have discovered that something better than a gatekeeper's or a watchman's job can be found for a partially disabled skilled mechanic and that the conservation of the remaining powers of the man and the utilization of his previous experience and training are alike a duty and a sound business proposition.

For our disabled soldiers and sailors, it seems clear that it is the duty of the nation (and the nation has already recognized it) so to manage its work that the men disabled in the service of the nation by wounds or disease may come out of the disaster improved morally, socially and economically. It is a great work and worth all our efforts and will well repay them.